

Date: Sat, 12 Feb 94 04:30:01 PST
From: Info-Hams Mailing List and Newsgroup <info-hams@ucsd.edu>
Errors-To: Info-Hams-Errors@UCSD.Edu
Reply-To: Info-Hams@UCSD.Edu
Precedence: Bulk
Subject: Info-Hams Digest V94 #139
To: Info-Hams

Info-Hams Digest Sat, 12 Feb 94 Volume 94 : Issue 139

Today's Topics:

 Hamblaster update
 Hamblaster Update II

Send Replies or notes for publication to: <Info-Hams@UCSD.Edu>
Send subscription requests to: <Info-Hams-REQUEST@UCSD.Edu>
Problems you can't solve otherwise to brian@ucsd.edu.

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We trust that readers are intelligent enough to realize that all text
herein consists of personal comments and does not represent the official
policies or positions of any party. Your mileage may vary. So there.

Date: 7 Feb 94 14:33:04 GMT
From: psinntp!psinntp!laidbak!tellab5!jwa@rutgers.rutgers.edu
Subject: Hamblaster update
To: info-hams@ucsd.edu

The Hamblaster Update

Over the past several months I posted updates about a
DSP "The Hamblaster" that Will Torgrim (N9PEA) and myself
are developing.

We are focusing our efforts on a packet modem that allows
the user to improve H.F. reception by interfacing the Ham-
blaster (a PC compatable DSP sound board) to a transceiver
and a packet or all mode TNC. Modems/filters for RTTY,
Packtor, Amtor are also under developement and are compatable
with the same control panal software.

Here are the latest developements
1-31-94

1) External Power supply

I think one feature that separates the Hamblaster from other sound boards is it's ability to run on an external 12 volt supply. When a filter or modem is loaded, You can turn off the computer and Hamblaster keeps on going and going and going!

When it's connected to a PK-232, there's no need to keep the computer on in order to keep the DSP alive. Right now, my PK232/Hamblaster is running and it's been operating for about 5 days

2) Adaptive (LMS) filter

There's ongoing development in this area. We are planning (I don't think this has been done before) to add controls to the LMS algorithm.

3) Fast autotune

We have a fast autotune routine that locks a packet modem to the received signal in few milliseconds. Tuning is a big problem on H.F. packet. Some stations are so far off frequency, the tnc can't receive the packets. The auto tune (or AFC) locks the DSP modem to the FSK center frequency.

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THE BOWTIE FILTER

Date: 7 Feb 94 14:46:31 GMT
From: psinntp!psinntp!laidbak!tellab5!jwa@rutgers.rutgers.edu
Subject: Hamblaster Update II
To: info-hams@ucsd.edu

The Hamblaster Update

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2) Adaptive (LMS) filter

There's ongoing development in this area. We are planning (I don't think this has been done before) to add controls to the LMS algorithm.

3) Soundblaster compatibility

The Hamblaster IS NOT soundblaster compatible. It was designed that way so that it will run independent of other sound boards. I can still use my Soundblaster to record sound, play music, load software from the CD or use the midi interface.

At the same time, I can receive packets or use
a DSP filter with my Ham equipment.

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THE BOWTIE FILTER

Date: 10 Feb 1994 17:36:15 GMT
From: mvb.saic.com!unogate!news.service.uci.edu!usc!math.ohio-state.edu!
news.acns.nwu.edu!casbah.acns.nwu.edu!lapin@network.ucsd.edu
To: info-hams@ucsd.edu

References <1994Jan28.171743.483@arrl.org>, <gregCKI0zw.Kuo@netcom.com>,
<1994Feb3.190229.8136@arrl.org>in
Subject : Re: RAMSEY FX TRANSCEIVER

The Ramsey thread...It just won't go away!

While reading on the throne, I came across an article that brought
to mind the Ramsey thread.

Date: Fri, 11 Feb 1994 16:44:31 GMT
From: agate!howland.reston.ans.net!pipex!sunic!psinntp!psinntp!arrl.org!
jlbloom@network.ucsd.edu
To: info-hams@ucsd.edu

References <gregCKI0zw.Kuo@netcom.com>, <1994Feb3.190229.8136@arrl.org>,
<gregCKywqn.2D0@netcom.com>
Subject : Re: RAMSEY FX TRANSCEIVER (now long)

Greg Bullough (greg@netcom.com) wrote:
: (excuse inclusion of a lot of text, but since Messrs. Hare and Bloom can't
: be relied upon to quote in context and fairly, and to limit attributions

: to what was *said* rather than what would be convenient for their attacks,
: it would seem necessary)
: In article <1994Feb3.190229.8136@arrl.org> jbbloom@arrl.org (Jon Bloom (KE3Z))
writes:
: >Greg Bullough (greg@netcom.com) wrote:
: >: In article <1994Jan28.171743.483@arrl.org> ehare@arrl.org (Ed Hare (KA1CV))
writes:
: >: >Greg Bullough (greg@netcom.com) wrote:
: >: >
: >: >: Steven has hit it on the head. As hams, we have for years said "can't
: >: >: afford a commercial rig? Home-brew or build a simple kit." Then
: >: >: QST and all the other magazines which bang this drum (which quite
: >: >: handily fills up magazine pages with circuits that few ever
: >: >: build) reap big advertising dollars from kit companies.
: >: >
: >: >For starters, I am not sure that few ever build projects from
: >: >magazines.
: >
: >: Why? Haven't you polled your readers, in order to make intelligent
: >: editorial decisions? Haven't you asked 'if not, why not?' '73' has
: >: an article-by article reader feedback form, every issue. If you
: >: don't have the information, you really aren't in much of a position
: >: to either support or refute my assertion, are you?

: > Well, at least Ed doesn't make "assertions" that he can't support
: >with data. If he doesn't have the data at hand, he doesn't make
: >statements as though they were facts.

: As I have stated before, and as even someone with a sixth-grade level of
: literacy ought to be able to glean from the above exchange, it was
: Mr. Hare who initially indicated that he was 'unsure' of his facts.

Huh? When did I suggest anything different? I'm not saying--and I
haven't said--that Ed didn't say that. I'm saying that what he said
was the truth.

: I responded that such a thing suprised me, having assumed that some
: survey would have been made and its results disseminated to the staffers.

A survey was made, but not everyone got a copy of the results, only
those who were working directly with the data.

: Since the issue in question was one of being in or out of touch with
: the ham population at large, this was very pertinent.

: He apparently mis-represented that; he indeed does believe that he has
: facts at hand.

How you come to that conclusion escapes me. He did not have the data at hand, so he didn't pretend that he did have it. Nor did he say, "No information exists about this at ARRL HQ." He said, "I am not sure." He misrepresented nothing; you're simply inferring something that isn't so. The fact that the data exists here (and that I have a copy) doesn't logically lead to the conclusion that Ed had the data, and particularly not that Ed knew what the data said and was lying about it. The statement, "I'm not sure" means just what it says. In this case, it means that Ed didn't have the data and didn't search it out.

: > But I *do* have the data at hand. Our recent (1992) market survey
: >shows that 35% of amateurs "enjoy building equipment or kits." 42%
: >enjoy "experimenting with equipment or antennas." So the statement that
: >few ever build circuits is clearly unsupportable.
: > Now, where's *your* data?

: I guess I consider almost 20 years as an active ham a pretty good basis
: for what my fellows do and don't do.

Anecdotal evidence is notoriously inaccurate. When nothing else is available, you use it. But when you have statistical or measured data, you use that; it's far more reliable.

: But let's look at these "facts" with a critical eye, shall we?

: 1. 35% is not exactly a clear majority, now is it?

Who said anything about a majority? The operative phrase here (your phrase) is "few ever build." Now, what number divides "few" from "not few" is a matter on which reasonable people can disagree. I think 35% is clearly "not few." Perhaps you disagree. But consider this: if we are to cover in QST only those activities which a majority of amateurs "enjoy," according to our survey the coverage would be limited to: talking with friends, mobile or portable operating, and listening. (Although hamfests and repeater operation do check in at 49%, which is within the margin of error of a majority.) Frankly, I would consider that a pretty limited QST. So, I don't accept that a majority is necessary in order to justify QST coverage; only a substantial interest is needed.

: 2. The 42% includes 'or antennas.' Considering that
: antennas are generally NOT plug-and-play items,
: I'd expect MOST hams have to do it. Does this
: mean the other 58% hate it?

It probably means the other 58% comprises some people who hate it and some who are indifferent.

: 3. The phrasing of the question begs for a higher
: number. They 'enjoy' it. I 'enjoy' sunning on
: the beach on a tropical isle. Doesn't mean I
: do it, or get to do it, very often. But I would

Presumably you can't enjoy it unless you do it. Would you have preferred we ask "do you do" rather than "do you enjoy?" I mean, we'd get a whopping response to "do you put connectors onto coax cables," but that doesn't mean very many enjoy it, or that it's the reason they like ham radio. What we were trying to get at in the survey is, what do people like to do in ham radio. And that, in my opinion, is one of the key questions that should drive the make-up of QST.

: submit that there are some vested interests in
: asking the question that way. Such as the advertising
: dollar. And such as justifying the existence of QEX.

You'll have to explain the vested interest to me; I sure don't get it. If dollars were the only measure, we'd fill the magazine with nontechnical material--it's a whole lot cheaper to produce. As for QEX, we lose money on that. So the "vested interest" would seem to be to show that there's no need for technical material so we can drop it.

: 4. The very existence of QEX can be taken to mean two
: things; there is sufficient interest to support a
: whole distinct publication; or there is insufficient
: interest to put the material into the mainstream.

Ah, but QEX is not about buildable projects (although it does contain a few). It's about advanced technical work. It doesn't relate to the discussion here, which is about publishing buildable circuits.

: And that it really doesn't support conclusions any more than the average
: Joe Ham's experience. Of course, Joe Ham spends his money based on his
: experience, more than Mr. Bloom's data. And it is also that experience
: which leads him to stay in the hobby rather than take up snowmobiling.

The point here is that the data is a measure of that experience. My personal experience, your personal experience, Ed's personal experience; they are *not* "average Joe Ham's experience" because no individual is average, with 0.7 spouses and 2.3 kids. You need to look at a lot of experiences to develop an average, and that's one of the things the survey technique does. (It also identifies where the average is not a useful measure, and where there are significant departures from "average.")

: >: >Some of the authors that have offered a kit have reported
: >: >large sales

: >
: >: And god bless 'em if they do, for they are the ones who recognize
: >: that parts procurement is 90% of the problem and 200% of the
: >: expense of home-brewing. Someone who take the time to write an article,
: >: and then offer a kit, with no intention of profiting by either is,
: >: IMHO, entitled to some sort of sainthood.
: >
: >But, according to you, QST shouldn't publish such articles. Isn't that
: >just a bit, well, inconsistent?

: Yes, and that should have been your first hint that you were, well,
: not correct in your interpretation of my position. Perhaps if you
: took the time to read and understand, you might gain insight
: outside of the boundaries of greater Newington.

Ad hominem attacks impress me not in the least.

: >: >something else. Go to any hamfest, note the rows upon rows of
: >: >vendors offering components. Hams are buying them, putting them
: >: >in bags and taking them home. They must be doing something with
: >: >the parts.
: >
: >: In my experience, they're gathering bits for something they'll
: >: 'get around to someday,' and or looking for a specific component
: >: for some simple use.
: >
: >So, hams are hoarding basements full of parts without ever using any of
: >them? *That's* your experience? Wierd!

: Aw c'mon. You mean to say you don't know bunches of hams with garages/
: basements full of stuff that they're going to assemble when they get
: 'a round tuit' along with some half-finished projects, and most of
: the parts for this or that? Where have you been?

Yes, I *do* know bunches of hams with bulging garages and basements
(and attics, too). But the reason they haven't gotten to those projects
is because they are building *other* things. And they are exactly the
people who build stuff from QST. They just don't have time to build as
much as they'd like!

: >Well, I did an informal poll of the technical editors and lab staff
: >here at HQ. Of the 10 people I talked to, one (count 'em) received his
: >license after the age of 20. So we've *all* had experience outside the
: >environment of ARRL HQ. We weren't born here in the ARRL Lab, you know!
: >And only a few of these people have EE degrees. (Just enough to keep
: >the other ones on the straight and narrow!) So, once again, the
: >available evidence shows your "assertion" to be in error.

: 'Had experience' and where you work every day are two different things.
: You get used to things. After five or more years, for example, it would
: seem strange for me to work somewhere that had no internet access, even
: though I know most people don't have it, and can remember what it was
: like when it was a challenge to move data to a system four miles away.
: That's normal. It really doesn't hurt anything, unless you *forget*
: that you're in a different situation from most people, and fail to
: accept that you have to do some different things to allow for it.

You mean, like take a survey to find out what people think, instead of
relying on our personal experience?

In any case, I don't think the situation is all that different. Most
of the people here at HQ who build stuff (which is not everyone, by any
stretch--on a guess, it's probably somewhere around that 35% number) do
it the same way as everyone else: they buy the circuit board and parts
kit from FAR Circuits or wherever. Those few of us who make use of the
test equipment in the lab made use of the test equipment in our
previous workplaces, too. (I can remember many Saturdays of working on
ham equipment at work before I ever came to work here.) So the
experience of people here at HQ is not dramatically different from that
of "average Joe Ham," despite what you may think.

[deleted]

: >: way, the League and QST have flirted with this policy from time to
: >: time, but they can't seem to get away from the 'all home-built' ideal.
: >
: > Do you *read* QST? Have you seen the "New Ham Companion" section? I
: >challenge you to find *one place* in the ARRL literature where it says
: >a new ham should homebrew his station in order to get on the air. Just
: >one place.

: It was all over the older League publications.

: Perhaps, if I have some time, I'll look up some citations.

Do so, please.

: Perhaps, Jon, you can fill us in on when the League and the editorial
: staff thereof, consciously chose to change to a editorial policy where
: home-brew was presented as an ancillary activity, rather than as an
: ideal?

Well, in the 10 years I've worked here, I've never felt that homebrew
was being held up as an ideal. I can't speak for the situation before
that.

: >full-page ads in *other* magazines. (Hey, maybe that's it... maybe all
: >your complaints are really about another magazine, and you've just
: >confused it with QST! At least that would explain why all of your
: >"assertions" are 180 degrees out.)

: Gee, wouldn't it be useful if we had an ARRL staff which, instead of
: attacking *MEMBERS* whose perceptions disturb them, claiming that
: 'all of your "assertions" are 180 degrees out' took the time to
: figure out what's wrong? Why do some people look at the ARRL this
: way? Why aren't a majority of the hams members? Why do memberships
: lapse?

I'm not attacking you, Greg. I'm attacking your conclusions. There's
a big difference.

: >: More correctly stated: 'by what the Directors want hams (particularly
: >: new hams) to see.'

: >

: >Really? On what basis do you supply this correction? Facts, please,
: >because all the information *I* have (from sitting in the editorial
: >review meeting every week) shows that what the editors discuss is what
: >we think the *members* want to read. And on the rare occasions I've
: >heard a Director comment on the content of QST, it's invariably been to
: >relay a *member* complaint or concern.

: I guess that means that the content is pretty well in tune with the
: Directors' desires, then. Again, I base this on the facts that:

: 1. QST is an official journal
: 2. QST seems to be as good at covering opinions which
: dissent from the League line as the National Review
: is at covering liberal politics; conversely, the
: League's positions are about as well covered in
: QST as conservatives are in the National Review.
: I rarely see something in QST which would help
: a member make up his mind on an issue.

: Perhaps it should be that way. I know I'd rather see it that way,
: and see it honestly admitted, than see it denied.

As I said in an earlier posting (not the one you quoted), there is a
difference between technical material (which is the subject--at least
the original subject--of this thread) and nontechnical material. Sure,
QST presents the Board's views about issues facing Amateur Radio. But
that doesn't influence the selection of technical material. Not that
I've ever seen, anyway.

: >: And good it was. QST Product Reviews are the ONLY ones I would ever

: >: trust. Mostly because I've seen gushing, press-release quality *articles*
: >: in 73 and CQ, masquerading as product reviews. It only begs the question
: >: of why, when this landmark kit has been on the market for several years
: >: already, it was just recently the subject of a review in QST. Lots of
: >: stuff of much lesser interest has appeared before this one. I mean,
: >
: >Uh, lesser interest to who? Got any support for that, Greg?

: The first thing that springs to mind was the review of the SWL receiver
: which was in the PR section a couple months back. Did it really deserve
: a full-blown review? It was a piece of equipment of only secondary (and
: to give due credit, by the time the review was perused, I understood
: it to be more like 'tertiary') interest to hams. The question is, was
: a full review necessary to establish that?

But how do you *know* it's secondary? That's my question. If you're
saying it's of secondary interest to you, fine. But if you're saying
it's of secondary interest to hamdom at large, I'd like to have that
based on something more than one man's opinion. Our selection of items
for "Product Review" treatment is based largely on what we've heard
from our members--what they like and don't like. (And they aren't shy
about telling us, fortunately.)

: >: I bought one of the close-outs of the first Ramsay 146 kits on sale
: >: a good two years ago! Haven't got around to assembling it yet, but
: >: I wish I'd known what to watch for before plunking even the bargain-basement
: >: price on the counter.
: >
: > Since you ask...we originally bought one of the Ramsey units in the
: >summer of 1991.

: ...that would have been a good time.

: > This was the earlier version (the FTR-146). We built
: >it and were in the process of reviewing it when we received a call
: >(unsolicited) from one of the folks at Ramsey, saying that they had
: >noticed we bought one and thought we'd be interested in knowing that
: >they were about to release a new design, and perhaps we would want to
: >hold off our review of what was about to become an obsolete unit. (At
: >the same time, I reported to Ramsey that the radio failed to meet
: >harmonic spectral purity requirements.) They promised to send us one of
: >the new units as soon as it became available. (Normally, we only
: >*purchase* Product Review items, but we decided that it would be hard
: >for them to fine-tune a kit :-)
: > We waited a couple of months, then called Ramsey. To make a long
: >story short, we called *every* couple of months, but we never received
: >the promised radio. Finally, we just bought one (through a third
: >party). This is the unit we reviewed. In March of 1993, we contacted

: >Ramsey to report that the radio we built didn't meet FCC specs. They
: >offered to send us one of their built radios, so we could check it
: >against ours. We did so, and found that *their* radio didn't meet
: >specs. In fact, it worked just like the one we built. We reported
: >that to them and asked that they provide a fix to the spectral purity
: >problems. They did so, and we implemented the fixes (as described in
: >the review article).
: > This entire process took just about two years, the bulk of which was
: >our waiting for Ramsey to deliver a promised radio--that we never got.

: This is interesting information indeed! Certainly, there is some 'fault'
: with Ramsey. It may even be that they knew what the likely results would
: be. We'll never know.

Nope, we won't.

: However, the option to purchase existed all along. And, it seems to me,
: that:

- : 1. There was *some* responsibility to somehow inform the
: readership of the problems seen with the first kit. After
: all, these kits are probably one of the most appealing
: items, especially to new hams, on the market today. QST
: was very accomodating to Ramsey. Would that they would hve
: been so to us! Again, this goes to an issue of being 'in
: touch' with what hams need.
- : 2. It is quite possible to 'tune' a kit. You can make sure that
: all the components are within design tolerances, you can
: take a very careful parts inventory, you can look at the
: PC board with a very good magnifier, and you can generally
: make sure that it's in the highest percentile of what you
: turn out.

Possible, yes, but not that easy. Since we ended up not getting a kit
donated from them, the point is moot. But I'll add that I have seen
kits donated for Product Review (from other manufacturers) that were
missing parts. But, yeah, that seemed odd to me, too!

: I wish, and I suspect some others do, that QST had pushed harder on this
: one, and been more out front with those of us that pay the bills. Especially
: when, as in this case, the initial work pointed to the possibility of a
: serious problem.

Well, only somewhat serious. The initial design had only harmonic
spectral problems, not the close-in spurs of the second unit. And the
fix for that was addition of one capacitor, or an external filter.
There's no doubt, though, that if we had it to do over again, we'd do
it differently--faster, that is. Live and learn.

: It's a much higher calling to point out problems for the ham-consumer,
: than it is to review the Conglomerate 1001D 8-band transceiver with
: DSP; of course the 1001D is a more fun toy to play with, but 95%
: of the time it works pretty much as advertised (across three color
: pages of QST, I might point out).

Not always. Read the reviews and note the problems we identify with
the units we review. Some of the high-priced units have been shown to
be deficient in one way or another. And, too, the risk factor is
higher on a \$2000 transceiver than on a \$150 kit. If you had to buy
one of the two "blind," without the availability of a review, would you
rather it be the \$2000 unit, or the \$150 one?

: What it comes down to is, you guys knew, or at least had an inkling,
: that there might have been a problem. And you didn't tell us! I guess
: I'd expect that either you'd find a way to tell us, or push to get
: the Review done, to settle the matter.

On this issue, I agree with you. We should have done--I should have
done--a better job. Having never before gone through an experience like
the one I described, I fumbled the ball somewhat. So, if you want to
heap vituperation on anyone, I'm the guy. But one mistake does not a
philosophy make. Extrapolating this error to the conclusion that we
don't care, or that we are out of touch just isn't warranted.

: And *THAT* is the kind of thing that I'm talking about when I claim
: that there is a divergence between what the ham radio population needs
: from the League's publications, and what they get.

Well, our occasional errors aside (we *are* human, whatever you may
think), our research, and our member feedback, show that we *are*
giving people much of what they want. Not everyone gets everything
they want, that's for sure. But overall, we're getting the information
people want to them. And the publications evolve to match the evolving
interests of our members. We're always interested in hearing opinions
as to what we could do better. But statements of opinion presented as
fact--based on one person's experiences, be they of 20 years standing
or 50 years standing--aren't going to carry as much weight as good
opinion research data. That is particularly the case when those
opinions run counter to the weight of other opinions we hear from
members. That's the bottom line to this discussion.

--

Jon Bloom KE3Z jbbloom@arrl.org

Date: (null)

From: (null)

"We hams are not all located on Wall Street [NOTE THE DATE!!], nor do we have at hand the facilities and personnel of a G. E. Research Laboratory. Most of us, therefore, need not so much guard against reckless abandon in designing the expensive technically idealistic sort of rig but rather must we beware of becoming niggardly in providing sufficient equipment of the right type to give us our money's worth in ultimate performance. There is many an otherwise good set in which an apparently slight change in design in the interest of false economy has resulted in a relatively enormous sacrifice of performance. It pays to be sure a penny-wise design may not pan out a pound-foolish flop."

Are you reading this, Mr. Ramsey?

'Nuff said.

Greg Lapin KD9AZ

End of Info-Hams Digest V94 #139

